

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 115-D

Project Title: Protecting Fish Creek Greenway in Ramsey County

Category: D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$300,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: .5 yr, July 2011 - December 2011

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

Acquire 20 acres in Fish Creek Greenway in Ramsey County, to protect Fish Creek, Mississippi River bluffs, and woodlands and grasslands, while enhancing access to new and existing public lands.

Name: DuWayne Konewko

Sponsoring Organization: City of Maplewood

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Maplewood MN 55109

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Web Address: www.ci.maplewood.mn.us

Location

Region: Metro

Ecological Section: Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

County Name: Ramsey

City / Township:

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Protecting Fish Creek Greenway in Ramsey County

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

This project will use \$300,000 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and \$305,000 in non-state funds, to acquire 20 acres of land adjacent to Fish Creek Open Space in Ramsey County. The City of Maplewood will acquire the land and deed it to Ramsey County to manage for protection of natural resources and public access to nature.

The Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway in Ramsey County encompasses over 500 acres of habitat on public and private land. The heart of the greenway is Fish Creek and Ramsey County's 142-acre Fish Creek Open Space. Fish Creek is one of the last largely undeveloped stream corridors in Maplewood and in Ramsey County. Much of this beautiful stream lies within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. The creek begins at Carver Lake in Woodbury and runs through oak woodlands, maple basswood forest, and emergent and open water marshes in Maplewood and St. Paul, before cutting through a scenic ravine and joining the Mississippi River. The creek and adjoining natural areas provide critical habitat for numerous wildlife species and migratory birds traveling the Mississippi River flyway.

In 2009, the City of Maplewood convened a commission to develop a protection plan for the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway. The commission included representatives from Maplewood, Ramsey County, and Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District. Several other organizations participated in the process including: National Park Service, Friends of the Mississippi, Metro Greenways, Friends of Maplewood Nature, Trust for Public Land, Minnesota Land Trust, Metropolitan Council, City of St. Paul, City of Woodbury, and Active Living Ramsey County. The plan, adopted in February 2010, recommends a comprehensive approach to protecting the greenway including acquiring 81 acres and supporting conservation easements, conservation development, and stewardship on public and private lands (www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/fishcreek). The protection plan for the greenway identifies and prioritizes parcels for acquisition based several parameters (see notes on Acquisition List).

The goals of this project are to: 1) protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and areas of high ecological quality in the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway; and 2) to provide access to new and existing public lands in the greenway. The goals will be achieved by acquiring fee title to 20 acres of land adjacent to existing public lands. The project will:

1. **Protect water quality in Fish Creek** by expanding the creek buffer and reducing the amount of developed land contributing stormwater runoff to the creek.
2. **Protect wildlife habitat and native plant communities.** 20 acres of wildlife habitat will be acquired, including areas of oak woodland and oak woodland brushland. This project helps us towards our goal of a minimum 600'-wide wildlife corridor along the creek.
3. **Protect Mississippi River bluff top.** Acquisition of bluff land will protect the bluff from erosion, prevent development adjacent to the bluff, and provide a site for a public overlook.
4. **Enhance public access.** There are currently no formal or maintained trails on the county open space. This project secures the final parcel of land (parcel 1) needed to create the Fish Creek Hiking Trail, a 1-1/2 mile trail through the greenway. Acquisition of parcels 2 and 3 will greatly improve access and trail opportunities on existing county land, which is limited due to entrance points.

This area serves residents of the Twin Cities, especially the over 500,000 residents of Ramsey County. Local and regional plans call for bike trails to and through the greenway, including connections to the Mississippi River Trail.

High priority parcels in the greenway are now for sale and in danger of being developed. Ownership of the project parcels changed in the past year and the price of the land has been reduced. This is likely our last opportunity to preserve these parcels of land. The protection plan for Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway has strong community, partner, and agency support. In addition to Maplewood's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, this project supports several regional natural resource plans. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources includes portions of the greenway in the *Metro Conservation Corridor*, and lists portions as a *Regionally Significant Ecological Area* and as a *Site of Biodiversity Significance*. The National Park Service's guidelines for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area rank portions of the greenway "high" ecological quality.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The City of Maplewood will acquire fee title to 20 acres of land and deed it to Ramsey County to manage as part of the county's Fish Creek Open Space. The landowner is amenable to splitting parcels so we can acquire areas identified in the protection plan as priorities for acquisition. Surveys of the parcels will be completed prior to the grant commencing. The land to be purchased includes parts of the following parcels: 242822310017, 242822320001, 242822320002, 242822310002.

Activity 1: Acquire Parcels

Budget: \$ 300,000

The City of Maplewood will complete all legal and financial transactions to acquire the property and will then deed it to Ramsey County.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Acquire Parcels	December 2011

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

- **City of Maplewood.** DuWayne Konewko, Community Development and Parks Director, is the project lead. He is responsible for coordinating the project, administering the grant, and working with the partners on all project activities. The city will be the recipient of the grant funds.
- **Ramsey County.** Gregory Mack, Ramsey County Parks Director, will participate in all project activities and will lead development of the management plan.
- **Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD).** Cliff Aichinger, RWMWD Director, will participate in project activities and development of the management plan.
- Each partner will contribute \$100,000 plus staff time to the project.

B. Timeline Requirements

Our goal is to complete this project in 6 months: July 2011-December 2011.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

This project is the first step in implementing the Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway plan. It acquires 20 of the 81 acres identified as priorities for acquisition. Future activities include additional acquisition, conservation easements, conservation development, and stewardship. The land acquired under this project will be managed as part of the Ramsey County Open Space system. The partners will work together to develop a restoration and management plan for the site, and to finance and implement restoration work and trail construction. Routine maintenance and management will be funded through Ramsey County operating funds. All three partners have restoration experience and have completed many successful natural resources projects.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: N/A	\$ -
Contracts: N/A	
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): acquire fee title to 20 acres of land owned by Lakeland Financial	\$ 300,000
Travel: N/A	\$ -
Additional Budget Items: N/A	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 300,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: City of Maplewood will use Park Assess Charge (PAC) funds for this project. Maplewood City Council unanimously approved the greenway plan and on April 26, 2010 council will act on a resolution of support for this project .	\$ 100,000	pending
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Ramsey County will use general county funds.	\$100,000	pending
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District will use general operating funds.	\$100,000	pending
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: N/A		
In-kind Services During Project Period: In-kind services will include staff time for project management, negotiations with landowner, legal and financial work. Partners will cover all other fees associated with acquisition.	\$ 5,000	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): N/A	\$ -	
Funding History: In 2009, Maplewood applied to LCCMR and to Metro Greenways for funding for land acquisition in the Fish Creek greenway. The LCCMR grant was not awarded and the city withdrew the Metro Greenways application because we were not far enough along in acquisition negotiations. Several things have changed since our 2009 proposals: 1) Ownership of the parcels changed, 2) The price was greatly reduced, 3) The city and its partners developed a comprehensive plan for the greenway, prioritized acquisition, and received great community and agency support for the plan, and 4) The city has had discussions with the new landowner, who is willing to split parcels so we can acquire areas of highest priority. It is our understanding there will be no Metro Greenways grant applications in 2010.	\$ -	

2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

Project Title: Protecting Fish Creek Greenway in Ramsey County

Project Manager Name: DuWayne Konewko

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$300,000

Final Title Holder(s): Ramsey County

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	Creek Buffer - North	fee title	Ramsey	3	44° 55' 53.67" N	92° 59' 53.39" W		
2	Creek Buffer - South	fee title	Ramsey	10	44° 55' 53.67" N	93° 00' 00.67" W		
3	Mississippi River Bluffs	fee title	Ramsey	7	44° 55' 53.67" N	93° 00' 10.22" W		


NOTES: Parcels for acquisition were identified and prioritized during development of the protection plan for Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway, a process that included input from the public and many partners. The acquisition priorities were determined based on Minnesota Land Cover Classification, ecological quality, terrain, presence of wetlands and streams, adjacent to existing public land, historical or cultural significance, and opportunity to enhance public access.

Fish Creek Greenway Protection



Legend

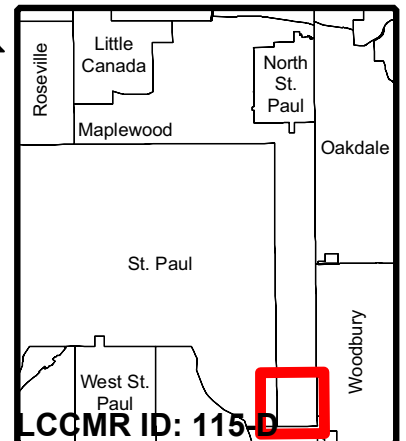
 Ramsey County Open Space

 Parcels to be acquired

① Creek Buffer - North: 3 acres

② Creek Buffer - South: 10 acres

③ Mississippi River Buffer: 7 acres



Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description:

Maplewood City Council unanimously approved the protection plan for Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway in February 2010. The council will act on a resolution in support of this grant proposal on April 26, 2010.

Project Manager Qualifications:

DuWayne Konewko is the Director of the Community Development and Parks Department for Maplewood. He is responsible for reviewing all development that occurs within the city as well as managing the city's many parks and open spaces.

Mr. Konewko graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Biology and has worked in both the private and public sector during his over 20-year career in the natural resources field. He spent seven years as the director of Environmental Services and Planning for Aitkin County, Minnesota and later served as a Project Manager for a consulting firm in Duluth, Minnesota. Mr. Konewko began his work at the City of Maplewood in 2003 as the Environmental Manager/Health Official and in 2007 was appointed Environmental Manager, with the Parks and Open Space under his supervision. He was appointed as the Deputy Public Works Director in early 2008 and was appointed as the Community Development and Parks Director in October 2008.

Organization Description:

Maplewood is a first-ring suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota. The City of Maplewood has a proud history of conservation and environmental leadership. In 1993, Maplewood was one of the first cities to pass an open space bonding referendum for the acquisition of land for conservation purposes. These funds totaling \$5 million dollars were used to acquire parcels from willing sellers to build the city's network of Neighborhood Preserves. The citizens who led the original Open Space drive ranked the Fish Creek area as one of the most important for acquisition activities, but unfortunately the city was unable to find a willing seller at the time.

Maplewood's 2030 Comprehensive Plan leads again by including a Natural Resources Plan chapter and designating Natural Area Greenways. It articulates a vision for stewardship of our natural resources and goals that include protecting and buffering ecosystems, and connecting and enlarging natural areas and wildlife habitat across public and private lands.

Maplewood's rain garden program is another example where the city practices conservation, environmental leadership, and responsible stewardship. Since 1997 over 500 residential rain gardens and over 40 larger city rain gardens have been installed. Maplewood's rain garden program has and continues to serve as a model not only for other cities within the metro area, but for cities across the country.

